

**What is claimed is:**

1       1. A method comprising the steps of:  
2           determining an Internet presence of a contact identified in an email message; and  
3           initiating an instant messaging (IM) chat session with the contact in response to  
4           determining that the contact is present.

1       2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of initiating the IM chat session  
2           comprises the steps of:  
3           generating an IM chat window;  
4           obtaining information from the email message; and  
5           displaying the obtained information in the generated IM chat window.

1       3. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of obtaining information from the  
2           email message comprises the step of:  
3           obtaining a subject of the email message.

1       4. The method of claim 3, wherein the step of displaying the obtained  
2           information comprises the step of:  
3           displaying the subject of the email message in the generated IM chat window.

1       5. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of displaying the subject of the  
2           email message comprises the step of:  
3           providing the subject of the email message as an IM chat message.

1       6.     The method of claim 2, wherein the step of obtaining information from the  
2     email message comprises the step of:  
3           obtaining a body of the email message.

1       7.     The method of claim 6, wherein the step of displaying the obtained  
2     information comprises the step of:  
3           displaying the body of the email message in the generated IM chat window.

1       8.     The method of claim 7, wherein the step of displaying the body of the  
2     email message comprises the step of:  
3           providing the body of the email message as an IM chat message.

1       9.     A system comprising:  
2           means for determining an Internet presence of a contact identified in an email  
3     message; and  
4           means for initiating an instant messaging (IM) chat session with the contact in  
5     response to determining that the contact is present.

1       10.    A system comprising:  
2           presence logic configured to determine an Internet presence of a contact identified  
3     in an email message; and  
4           chat-initiation logic configured to initiate an instant messaging (IM) chat session  
5     with the contact in response to determine that the contact is present.

1        11.     The computer-readable medium of claim 10, further comprising:  
2              chat-window-generation logic configured to generate an IM chat window;  
3              information-retrieval logic configured to obtain information from the email  
4              message; and  
5              display logic configured to display the obtained information in the generated IM  
6              chat window.

1        12.     The computer-readable medium of claim 11, further comprising:  
2              subject-retrieval logic configured to obtain a subject of the email message.

1        13.     The computer-readable medium of claim 12, further comprising:  
2              subject-display logic configured to display the subject of the email message in the  
3              generated IM chat window.

1        14.     A computer-readable medium comprising:  
2              computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to determine  
3              an Internet presence of a contact from an email message; and  
4              computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to initiate an  
5              instant messaging (IM) chat session with the contact in response to determine that the  
6              contact is present.

1       15. The computer-readable medium of claim 14, further comprising:  
2           computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to generate an  
3       IM chat window;  
4           computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to obtain  
5       information from the email message; and  
6           computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to display the  
7       obtained information in the generated IM chat window.

1       16. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, further comprising:  
2           computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to obtain a  
3       subject of the email message.

1       17. The computer-readable medium of claim 16, further comprising:  
2           computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to display the  
3       subject of the email message in the generated IM chat window.

1       18. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further comprising:  
2           computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to provide the  
3       subject of the email message as an IM chat message.

1       19. The computer-readable medium of claim 15, further comprising:  
2           computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to obtain a  
3       body of the email message.

1        20. The computer-readable medium of claim 19, further comprising:  
2              computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to display the  
3              body of the email message in the generated IM chat window.

1        21. The computer-readable medium of claim 20, further comprising:  
2              computer-readable code adapted to instruct a programmable device to provide the  
3              body of the email message as an IM chat message.